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WINTER 1991

# specially FOR Seniors

A quarterly newspaper from the Ontario Advisory Council on Senior Citizens □ Circulation 993,963

for Seniors

## Toll-free hotline expands services

Every month the Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs receives up to 2,000 telephone calls, the majority from seniors or family members who have questions about government or community services.

"There is a wide variety of programs and services for seniors in Ontario but sometimes it is difficult to find out about them or to understand how they work," said Phil Adams, Special Advisor in the Office.

To make it easier for seniors to get the information they need, the Office has expanded its toll-free telephone inquiry service. More telephone information officers have been hired, most of whom are seniors.

Weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., information officers are ready to answer questions on everything from pensions to property tax credits or local services to help seniors continue to live at home.

"Many seniors do not know that they can phone us free of charge from anywhere in the province when they have a question," said Mr. Adams.

## Bill protects confidentiality of health information

Health Minister Evelyn Gigantes has introduced a bill to prevent the unauthorized use of health card numbers and protect the confidentiality of health information.

Only providers of health care services and the Ministry of Health can use health card numbers or require people to show the card.

The new legislation prohibits individuals, businesses and organizations from requiring people to show their health card as a condition of receiving goods or services. It will also prohibit the collection or use of health numbers to obtain information for data banks, credit chequing and mass mailing.

We will keep readers informed of the progress of the bill.

To encourage more seniors to use the telephone inquiry service, the Office has produced a brochure entitled *Answers for Seniors* which highlights the hotline as well as lists publications available from the Office.

The brochure will be distributed province-wide in late February by the major hardware and drugstore chains and some financial institutions.

"We've been very impressed with the willingness of business to make the brochure available to seniors in their stores and branches," said

Mr. Adams. Among those participating are: Home Hardware, Pro Hardware, Guardian Drugs, Pharma Plus, Shoppers Drug Mart, IDA, Royal Bank, Bank of Montreal, Scotiabank, Royal Trust and Caisse Populaire.

The brochure is also being sent to libraries, hospitals, seniors' clubs, and municipal offices across Ontario.

The toll-free inquiry number for the Office is 1-800-267-7329. For those living in Metro Toronto, the number is 327-2422.

## Creating tomorrow's heirlooms



Hazel Reid (left) and Ena Evans add their stitches to a joint project of the Leamington Peaceful Quilters Bee. (Story on page 4.)

## Advisory Council issues Annual Report

The sixteenth annual report of the Ontario Advisory Council on Senior Citizens has now been released. The Honourable Elaine Ziomba, Minister of Citizenship with responsibility for Human Rights, Disabled Persons, Seniors and Race Relations, tabled the report in the Legislature on December 19, 1990.

The report chronicles the major activities of the Council during the 12-month period April 1, 1989 to March 31, 1990. Copies may be purchased for \$2.00 at Publications Ontario, Main Floor, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, or ordered by mail from: Publications Ontario, 5th Floor, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario

**Yes, this is recycled paper**

*Especially for Seniors* has been printed on recycled paper since the Winter 1990 issue. If you live in an area with Blue Boxes, we encourage you to recycle the paper again when you're through with it.

# Finding a new physician



How do I find a doctor who's right for me?

There is no simple answer to this question because the choice is an individual one based on your own personal needs and expectations, says Dr. Marjorie Keymer. Dr. Keymer is a family physician practising in Toronto. Her guidelines for finding a new doctor were published in a recent issue of the Ontario Medical Association's *Patient Update*.

Following are some of Dr. Keymer's suggestions.

#### Define your needs.

Examine your situation as it exists today, and try to foresee your future requirements. Take into account your medical problems and emotional needs. Also, look back on your experiences with physicians in the past. Think about a relationship you had with a doctor that was particularly good, and ask yourself what made it that way.

#### Define your service requirements.

What is your preferred hospital? Is it important to have your physician affiliated with the hospital?

#### Make a list of available doctors.

It's best that you find a family physician, since you will require a doctor who has a broad knowledge of all levels and types of care. Use your personal contacts in the community to develop a list of potential physicians. Friends, neighbours, clergy, dentists, pharmacists, and public health nurses may know a doctor who they feel may meet your needs. The hospital of your choice will also have a family practice or geriatric department with available physicians.

#### Contact the physician's office.

The receptionist is an excellent source of information. Ask if the physician is taking new patients. Does he or she have any special interest, e.g., paediatrics, geriatrics? Does the physician practise alone, or is he/she part of a group of doctors? How long has the physician been in practice, and with which hospital is he/she affiliated? If possible, make an appointment to see the physician when you are well.

#### Interview the physician.

Make it clear at the outset that your first visit is to get acquainted. The physician will review your history, including your living circumstances and reasons for seeking a new physician. Ask about the doctor's office routines, and approach to prescribing medications. Consider this information, as well as your feel-

ings about the physician, before deciding to make him/her your family practitioner.

If you are dissatisfied with your current physician, you may have some problem-solving to do.

Ask yourself what difficulties you're having in your dealings with your physician. Have things changed in recent months? Do you have specific needs you feel are not being met? Most importantly, have you discussed the problem with your physician?

You may well settle your problem through a discussion, and develop a better patient/doctor relationship in the process. However, if you feel that such an approach would not help, then it is apparent you have examined the situation carefully and have a clear understanding of your needs regarding a physician. You can then begin the process of finding a new doctor.

## Good Neighbours comes to town

A newspaper carrier notices a customer's papers have not been taken in and checks to make sure all is well. A student shovels snow from an older neighbour's walkway. A senior picks up a homebound friend's mail from the superbox, or just drops by for a chat. They're all carrying the Good Neighbours message.

Aimed at making communities even friendlier and more supportive places to live, Good Neighbours is an awareness campaign that encourages people to help each other in small ways. It is a project of the Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs in partnership with the Royal Bank, Shoppers Drug Mart and *Today's Seniors*.

The concept was tested by Chatham, Grey-Owen Sound, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and the Region of Halton's municipalities of Acton, Burlington, Georgetown, Milton and Oakville.

As a result of Good Neighbours, the Police Department in Halton Region now runs workshops to help seniors brush up their driving skills. In Sudbury, a regular newspaper column publicizes individual good deeds by

good neighbours. Owen Sound uses radio interviews to let the community know about seniors' needs and to suggest ways that individuals can respond. In Thunder Bay, a Good Neighbours speakers' bureau was set up. After a talk at a local high school, students set up a snow-shovelling service. The Oakville Public Library has opened a resource centre to assist professionals to better meet the needs of seniors.

Other Ontario regions and municipalities that are interested in being Good Neighbours communities include Cambridge, Collingwood, Elliot Lake, Haliburton, Kitchener, Sault Ste. Marie, Whitby, Windsor and the Town of Newcastle.

The Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs has prepared a guide to help communities introduce Good Neighbours. Posters, brochures, buttons and sweatshirts are also available. If you're interested in bringing Good Neighbours to your community, call (416) 327-2460 for information, or write to: Good Neighbours, Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs, 76 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N3.

## Especially Seniors

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### MEMBERS OF THE ONTARIO ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SENIOR CITIZENS 1990-91

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**Please do not write to us about changes of address.** When you notify Old Age Security, your address label is automatically updated. However, if you wish to be deleted from our mailing list, clip the label from your paper and mail it with your request to *Especially for Seniors*. Please be patient. Changes to the mailing list take a while.

For information on programs and services available to seniors in Ontario, telephone the Ministry of Citizenship's Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs, (416) 327-2422. Outside the Toronto area, dial toll-free 1-800-267-7329.

# THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

"So here hath been dawning another blue day, think, wilt thou let it slip useless away?" Many in our generation grew up with this bit of poetry and with this general philosophy forming our personalities. Those were days that were a little less hurried, when people lived independently but interdependently, when people took time to be neighbourly.

A reminder that we need to care for and about each other is the basis of the Good Neighbours campaign launched recently by the Ministry of Citizenship's Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs. After careful planning and a testing process, communities as diverse as Halton Region, Owen Sound, Windsor and Chatham adopted this concept. With business, government and citizens' groups coming together in local councils, it furthers awareness of the need for "people caring for people." Good Neighbours communities are springing up across the province.

Members of the Ontario Advisory Council on Senior Citizens are continuing the search for information on aging of persons in rural and small-town Ontario. Recently, Council spent two-and-a-half days in Grey-Bruce Counties, meeting in Markdale with more than 100 older adults and representatives of agencies serving seniors. They and we travelled many miles to



JoAnne Fillimore, Chairman  
Ontario Advisory Council on  
Senior Citizens

come together and it was good! They provided the reality and the personal touch that Council needs to hear.

As I travel the province meeting with many of you in a variety of settings, on a variety of occasions, a thought is coming increasingly to the fore in my mind. We are told that through technology and medical advances, many of us can expect to live 20 years longer than our forebears. To me, just surviving longer is not the issue; it is important that life be worth living in those extra years. Gerontologists call it "Quality of Life" in

"Aging" and it was the theme of this year's 1990 meeting of the Canadian Association of Gerontologists in Victoria, B.C. About 1,300 professionals joined in scientific and educational sessions.

To give later life real quality, I hear you saying you want to be able to make your own decisions, to remain in your own home, and to be able to continue to be a contributing member of society. Making decisions includes everything from a pre-retirement plan modified from time to time as situations change, to being in control of the way we die. Palliative Care teams are becoming increasingly available to support the terminally ill and the family, and to make death with dignity possible, often at home.

Also, recognition needs to come that our home is not necessarily where we raised our family, but can be a more suitable accommodation, ranging from an apartment to a retirement lodge or a home with nursing care. We must make where we live our home by our attitude. Being a volunteer, sharing in an intergenerational program or being a Good Neighbour and many other ways are open to each of us to maintain quality in our days.

## Mailing list changes

As many readers know, we have been having problems with the mailing list. This issue's circulation figure shows the changes we have made.

## Window on technology: a new view of home

Modern technology can make daily living easier and safer for older people and those who have a disability.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has assembled a wide selection of products and ideas at the Window on Technology Centre. Located in Metro Toronto, the permanent Centre offers a look at a convenient, well-designed home.

The displays show how you can make a home safer and more livable either through simple modifications or extensive renovations, depending upon your needs and financial resources. Ideas include:

- automatic door and window-openers;
- oven that opens sideways for easier access;
- easy-grip handles on kitchen utensils;
- motorized kitchen cabinets that can be raised or lowered;
- sloping sink for easier dishwashing;
- auto-dial telephone;
- swing-clear door hinges to give extra clearance for a wheelchair or walker;
- lamps that turn on and off with a touch;
- slippers with Velcro fasteners;
- non-slip flooring;

colour schemes for people with vision difficulties.

Many of the products are readily available, useful and appealing to everyone, regardless of age or ability. For example, many of the electrical appliances found in the Centre are sold in department stores throughout Canada. Other products, such as a reclining chair that also helps people reach a standing position, are designed to meet very specific needs.

A visit to the Centre is a hands-on experience. You can push buttons, handle objects, try out the furniture. It can

make an interesting outing for a seniors' centre or a group of friends. Groups should be limited to 10 to 15 visitors. The second Wednesday of every month is an open house from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

If you would like to visit the Centre, telephone (416) 730-6470. For information on the products, write to the Program Technology Branch, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 5140 Yonge Street, 12th Floor, North York, Ontario M2N 6L7. A travelling display also visits fairs, expositions and similar events across the province.

## Traffic Trivia for Seniors

with Moe Desjardins, Ministry of Transportation Ontario  
83 Algoma Boulevard West, Timmins, Ontario P4N 2R4



**Question: In what year did motor vehicle registration begin in Ontario?**

A. 1903    B. 1905    C. 1914    D. 1922

**Answer: A.**

In 1903 it became mandatory that the new-fangled, clattering, stinking, polluting thing known as the automobile be registered. Many felt uncomfortable – to say the least – with this new invention that scared the "bejabers" out of the horses. The first year boasted a registration total of 178 vehicles, compared to 7,485,984 in 1989.

**Question: When travelling on a highway, the driver of a motor vehicle is not permitted to carry in a house or boat trailer:**

A. Pets    B. Persons    C. Firearms    D. Flammable Materials

**Answer: B.**

Persons may not be carried in a house or boat trailer.

# Quilting: "It's part of our heritage"

An old craft is gaining new popularity. Stitches of all ages are rediscovering quilting as a way to express their creativity in fabric.

"The last 10 to 15 years have seen a great resurgence of quilting as a craft," says June Dickin, of Leamington, Ontario, "and it's drawing more seniors as the population ages." Mrs. Dickin had been quilting as a hobby for about 10 years when heart surgery cut short her career as a teacher/librarian. Four years ago, she founded the Erie Shores Quilters' Guild in Leamington as a way to channel her energies in retirement.

Expecting about 20 people at the initial meeting, she was astonished when 50 turned up! The Guild now has 90 active members and continues to attract new enthusiasts.

"It's a phenomenon – not just in this area but across Canada and in countries like the United States and Japan as well," says Mrs. Dickin.

The Leamington quilters range between 20 and 90 years of age, including one retired man. The majority are seniors who frequently act as mentors to younger members. The Guild holds quilting classes and brings in speakers and teachers. There is a lending library of books and patterns, as well as monthly newsletter. Meetings are held the third Monday of every month.



June Dickin gets down to work on one of her own designs.

In addition, some quilters join quilting bees and work as a team, generally on a larger piece which is auctioned off for a good cause. About 15 members of the Peaceful Quilters Bee get together twice a week at the United Church to work on their joint venture, have lunch, and enjoy the company. "It's a social experience," says Mrs. Dickin. "It's almost as if the end product is not as important as the process." If arthritis or weak vision is a problem for some, this is taken in

stride. Other quilters and purchasers of a completed piece accept that sometimes stitches may vary in size.

Like other art or craft forms, quilting techniques and designs range from traditional to contemporary. Mennonite quilts, known for their traditional approach, are prized possessions in many homes, and members of the Erie Shores Guild include many area Mennonite quilters. They too hold quilting bees which produce the lovely quilts auctioned at the Annual Relief Fund Bazaar held in Leamington every May, notes Mrs. Dickin.

Mrs. Dickin herself makes "very contemporary, very modern pieces." Several of her quilts recently won design awards in the United States, and her work has been featured in several quilting publications. She is the recipient of an Ontario Crafts Council Design Award.

"Quilting has become almost more than a craft – it's part of our heritage," she says. "It will be interesting to see how the next generation carries it on."

There are quilting guilds in communities across Ontario. For information about their locations, contact: Ontario Quilting Connections, 322 East Avenue North, Hamilton, Ontario L8L 5J5, or Canada Quilts Magazine, P.O. Box 39, Station N, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3A2.

## Words & Pictures

Here is another winning entry from the cartoon contest held in the Fall 1989 issue of *Especially for Seniors*. The idea was submitted by Norman Stirling of Oshawa, and is illustrated here by "Skeff" (John Skeffington) of Ottawa.



Norman Stirling, Oshawa

Mr. Stirling is a retired high school teacher. His idea represents an issue of concern – "something it seemed possible that children in the future might say," he said.

## Stretch the life of your appliances

Today, more than ever, we rely on home appliances for comfort and convenience. With proper maintenance, says the Ministry of Energy, you can stretch the working life of your appliances and avoid costly repair bills.

□ Before starting any maintenance work, switch off the appliance and disconnect it from power or water sources. And be prepared to call for professional or emergency help if a possibly dangerous situation should arise in the course of your work.

Here are some tips from the ministry for working on some of the more common household appliances.

### Refrigerators

□ Free circulation of air is important around a refrigerator. Remove any obstructions. Check the freezer section for ice buildup. If ice is more than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick it is time to defrost.

□ Wash the interior of the unit with warm water and baking soda. Dust and dirt should be removed from the coils at the back of the fridge by using the brush attachment of a vacuum cleaner.

□ Test the door seal by closing the door on a two dollar bill. If the bill pulls out easily, there is a poor seal. Test at different locations around the door. Replace the seal if necessary.

□ For peak efficiency, refrigerator settings should be at  $38^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $3^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and the freezer should be kept at  $0^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).

### Freezers

□ Never use a knife to remove ice. On upright models, take out and clean the

strainer on the drain pipe or hose and clean the evaporator tray.

### Ranges

□ Never line the drip pans or oven cavity with foil. It may look nice, but the foil interferes with the flow of heat and can cause damage to the heating elements and the oven lining.

□ Switch off the power at the panel and check the fuses on the range. These are usually located on or near the control panel. Tighten fuses fingertight.

□ If you have a pressure cooker, it makes sense to use it. A pressure cooker cuts cooking time by about two-thirds, saving both time and energy. Follow the instructions from the manufacturer, making sure the pressure cooker is filled correctly and sealed.

□ Toaster ovens use a lot less energy than conventional ovens. To make toast or cook small meals, it makes a lot of sense to use a toaster oven.

### Microwave Ovens

□ A microwave oven uses less than half the energy that a conventional range does. For a quick cup of tea or coffee, put a cup of water in the microwave and in a few seconds on full power you will have a boiling cup of water.

□ A microwave costs between one and two dollars a month to operate. Using a range to do the same work will cost between four and five dollars.

□ Never operate a microwave empty. Allow space around the microwave for air circulation.

## Elaine Ziemba discusses her role as Minister

In September, 1990, Premier Bob Rae appointed the Honourable Elaine Ziemba Minister of Citizenship with responsibility for Human Rights, Disabled Persons, Seniors and Race Relations. In a recent interview with *Especially for Seniors*, the Minister discussed her new role.

**EFS:** Before your election to the Legislature, you were involved in a number of activities related to older adults.

**Minister:** I was Executive Director of the St. Clair West Meals on Wheels in Toronto. Also, I was President of a federation of Metropolitan Toronto community-based agencies, a group that lobbied government on seniors' issues. I sat on, then chaired, a committee of five provincial organizations working for more pay equity in agencies working with seniors - home helpers with Meals on Wheels and case management workers, for example.

**EFS:** Are there any areas in which you have a particular interest?

**Minister:** I want to see more services available in the community for seniors who want to stay in their own homes - also for people with a disability - ten per cent of clients of Meals on Wheels were disabled. It's the little things that can be a problem - like cleaning the refrigerator, signing the rent cheques. Things start to escalate until people think they can't handle them.

In spite of good volunteers, the problem remains. With Meals on Wheels, there were so many good people - they could see if something was disturbing someone. Sometimes all that is needed is help with small tasks - there need be no major medical component. But people have their own problems - with the recession, perhaps - and may not think of the person next door.

**EFS:** What do you view as the most important aspect of your responsibility for seniors?

**Minister:** This goes back to the philosophy behind my entire portfolio - that everyone should have the opportunity for an equal and equitable life. There is still sexism out there, there is racism, and people are frightened of growing old. We cannot "shelve" people just because they reach 65 years of age. We have to change our attitudes. Age is not as important as who the person is.

**EFS:** What are your priorities for seniors in terms of your new role?

**Minister:** We must look at legislation to protect people living in rest and retirement homes. We must make sure that these homes are serving the interests of seniors and not just profit-making. In some cases, we are seeing rent increases between 30 and 62 per cent. These homes are not apartments or nursing homes, so they are not regulated. Seniors are being squeezed out economically. But there are people out there doing a good job as well.



Elaine Ziemba (standing) addresses Advisory Council members

I was excited to announce the recent appointment of Ernie Lightman from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto as a commissioner to enquire into unregulated residential facilities.

This appointment is consistent with a key recommendation in the Coroner's Jury report on the death of a man who died after being assaulted in a boarding home. He had been discharged from a mental health facility. For ten years, I've been saying that we can't de-institutionalize people without a back-up plan for providing support in the community. After I made the announcement, I went home and realized that this was why I wanted to get elected.

Also, we're looking at moving quickly on the issue of advocacy and guardianship for both seniors and people with disabilities. There have been a number of reports on this issue but no action.

**EFS:** Given the broad range of your responsibilities, how much attention do you feel you will be able to give to seniors' issues?

**Minister:** Combining the responsibilities for matters related to seniors, disabled persons, human rights and race relations was done with purpose. There are many issues that cross over - by bringing them all together, we hope to deal with these issues as a cohesive package. The Throne Speech talked about fairness, about making our communities supportive places where everyone, including those who are vulnerable, can have equal participation in the life of our province.

It's the commitment of the government that counts as much as who is responsible for what. If you don't have total commitment, you won't get results. There were several responsibilities of which I would have been happy to get one. I'm thrilled to get the whole package.

## Nominations invited for Ontario Senior Achievement Awards

Is there someone you think deserves an Ontario Senior Achievement Award? These awards honour outstanding seniors who have made significant contributions to their communities and to the quality of life in this province.

The Honourable Elaine Ziemba, Minister of Citizenship with responsibility for Human Rights, Disabled Persons, Seniors and Race Relations, is inviting the public to send in nominations for the 1991 awards. To be eligible for an award, a person should be 65 years of age or over, be a resident of Ontario, and have made significant contributions in one or more of the following categories: Arts / Literature, Community

Service, Education, Environment / Science, Fitness / Recreation / Sports, Humanitarian Activities, Preservation of History, Volunteerism, or Other.

Senior Achievement Awards are a highlight of Senior Citizens' Month celebrations held in Ontario each June. The 1991 awards will be presented at a special ceremony at Queen's Park, Toronto. To obtain nomination forms or more information, write to: Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs, 6th Floor, 76 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N3, or call (416) 327-2422. Outside the Toronto area dial toll-free 1-800-267-7329. The deadline for receipt of nomination forms is April 2, 1991.

# Women's Musical Clubs promote love of music



For over a century, the women's musical clubs of Canada have brought international names in music – as well as talented, up-and-coming newcomers – to public attention. Thanks to their efforts, musicians including guitarist Andres Segovia, soprano singer Leontyne Price, contralto Marian Anderson and violinist Nathan Milstein made either their Canadian or local debuts in communities across the country.

There is no formal connection between the clubs across Canada – only a desire to promote the love of music and make it accessible to everyone. In Ontario, the Duet Club of Hamilton and the Women's Musical Club of Toronto carry on the tradition. The Duet Club, the "grandmother" of all the clubs, celebrated its centenary in 1988-89; the Toronto club is 93 years old this year.

The earliest clubs were formed by small groups of women dedicated to the study and appreciation of music. It was a time when men devoted their time to the material world, and it fell mainly to women to nurture the arts. Club activities ranged from recitals in a private home to open concerts. Some clubs required that members be musicians and organized their own musical events. Others brought in guest performers, and still others chose to support young musicians in the community.

Over the years, the clubs expanded their activities along with their memberships. The Hamilton Duet Club and the Toronto Women's Musical Club present annual programs of reasonably priced concerts and recitals – including afternoon concerts in Toronto, conveniently starting at 1:30 p.m. – and they continue to support talented young Canadians.

And although most of the clubs were originally intended for women, today men are very welcome and form a significant part of the concert audiences.

The clubs are non-profit organizations, staffed by volunteers.

For information about the Duet Club of Hamilton, write to: 168 Buckingham Drive, Hamilton, Ontario L9C 2G7.

Information about the Women's Musical Club of Toronto is available from: Secretary-Treasurer, 27 Anderson Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5P 1H5.

## More on distress centres

The last issue of *Especially for Seniors* listed distress centres in various parts of Ontario (*Where to call across the province, Fall 1990*). We have since learned of some additions and changes to this list.

Although there is no centre in Niagara Falls, people in Thorold may call the St. Catharines number, (416) 688-3711, and those in Welland may dial (416) 734-1212 toll free. There are also centres in Hamilton and Nobleton: Telecare Hamilton (416) 525-8611; Telecare York, Nobleton (416) 895-1212 or (416) 727-1212.

Other updated telephone numbers are as follows:

Life Line Telecare Inc., Lindsay (705) 878-4411; London Distress Centre (519) 667-6711; Telecare South York Region, Richmond Hill (416) 737-8377; Stratford Telecare (519) 273-0111; Salvation Army Suicide Prevention Centre, Toronto (416) 285-0099; D.C. of Windsor-Essex (519) 256-5000; Woodstock Telecare (519) 537-3451.

## LETTERS FROM THE MAILBAG

FROM a reader in Belleville:

A letter in *Mailbag*, Fall 1990 concerning longevity expresses my feelings so succinctly I would like to congratulate the writer from Aurora.

Being past 80 and being reasonably healthy and active with some help from minimal medication, even the fact of having my doctor and family in possession of a living will, when I see the vegetative state of friends, not even my age, in nursing homes and hospitals, one is indeed very often filled with terror. Not only for one's self, but the ordeal for the family. I have told my family that, if some day I am gone quickly, mourn gently, but also be thankful, for me, because that is how we all pray to make our exit.

Anything we can do, while still in our reasonable intellect, we should try to do, so if writer from Aurora has any practical suggestions, many of his peers would be fully supportive. Ah! His! Naturally the word to our generation means mankind, and be the writer male or female it matters not.

The final argument to avoid all the feeding, diapering etc. of course is, the government (the taxpayers) can't afford it.

FROM a reader in Downsview:

For much of my life I considered myself immortal. Death was an event for others, not for me. I suppose these thoughts came into being during my service with the Canadian Army during World War II. Many people I knew died but I was spared. As time has passed, the reality of life and death becomes more obvious

to me. Certainly the passage of the years has an effect but also the onset of disease. I have had triple bypass surgery and also have emphysema. The quality of my life I considered to be excellent but I must also realize that death is quite a bit closer for me than it was even five years ago. I am not concerned or in any way perturbed about the advent of my passing but I had been concerned about the impact it would have on my daughter and family.

With this in mind I (pre-arranged) my cemetery arrangements. I suppose to some people this may seem grotesque, to arrange one's own property and the disposal of my body, but to me it makes sense. I love my daughter very much and if I can make it slightly easier for them at my passing then it has been worth it.

FROM a reader in Toronto:

Do you have the faintest idea of what "Seniors" need? It is companionship! Gourmet dinners take place when female seniors are fearful of returning home alone. I have tried to suggest to them that a gourmet lunch for seniors would fill a real need. Aren't there many people like me who would welcome a "telephone" friendship – someone our own age with our own background of memories, just to talk to? First names only? O.K. Most of us have lost touch if not life with our one-time contemporaries, but it seems that there are many of us around, though disparate. I would like to hear through your publication if I am the only person who expresses this

opinion or if there are many who are just not being heard. We are not all senile!

FROM a reader in Toronto:

Do any other readers agree that the name *Especially for Seniors* sounds patronizing? (It gets to me.) The French name sounds much better, *Le Courier des Aînés*. What's wrong with calling the English part *Seniors' Courier*? Analysing the title *Especially for Seniors*, it sounds like a paper someone has made up FOR the seniors, instead of the voice OF the seniors.

FROM a reader in North Bay

Re *Stay Safe – Bathroom* (Fall 1990) – I would add that the most important safety device in my bathroom is an "L-shaped" bar installed on the wall over the bathtub. It allows you a safe hold while getting in or out of the tub and also a grab bar while you shower.

FROM a reader in Orleans:

In response to a 79 1/2 year old cyclist (*Mailbag*, Fall 1990) who commented on "softy" motorcyclists. Sir, I doff my helmet to you on your cycling accomplishments. (As a 74 1/2 year old "softy" motorcyclist) I'm inspired by them, so inspired that I will take up cycling when I become elderly and no longer have the strength to lift my 600 lb. motorcycle onto its centre stand or (am) unable to drive on a 500 mile trip in one day in the rain, as I've done on numerous occasions, e.g. Ottawa to Lake Placid, Lake George and Saratoga Springs, USA, in the 1989 Americade, plus Poker runs, Ride for Sight, Blue Knights charity runs, etc.

## LE SAC AUX LETTRES







LES MEMBRES DU CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE L'ONTARIO

## Bons Voisins s'etend à d'autres localités



